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## Utilization of E-resources by Students in Nigerian University Libraries

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## **Utilization of E-resources by Students in Nigerian University Libraries**

### **Abstract**

The research is on the use of e-resources by students in Nigerian university libraries. With the advent of information communication technologies, the library location and the methods of providing library services to the users have vividly been changed to electronic setting. The study aims at identifying the purpose for using e-resources and reasons for not using e-resources. Survey research method was adopted. Questionnaire was used as a means to obtain information from the respondents. Result shows that the students use e-resources purposely for academic dissemination, study and research. Also, majority of the respondents use e-resources because they are easily accessible anywhere, current and up-to-date. The paper also looked at the different methods in which library could assist its users in getting their information needs easily in modern library environment. The study concludes that adequate devices for screen reading should be provided and made accessible to users, as this will aid users in accessing information easily rather than straining their eyes reading through the screen.

**Keywords:** E-resources; Library; Utilization; Students; Nigeria; University Library.

## **Introduction**

Before going into utilization of electronic e-resource, it is important to know what an e-resource is and the purpose it serves. E-resource can be defined as a novel, compilation of stories and / or poetry, self-help manual, a discourse or any text of book span. Some e-resources may have picture and charts bounded within the pages, and others may attest to be more interactive and trait audio and /or video competence (Zaid, 2012).

In recent years, several researches have been carried out which have shown the consequence, the boost in utilization and the progressive access of e-resources in the academic and libraries. The reasons for this is well recognized: Low cost (in distribution), storage ability, easy access, updating ability, among others reimbursement. The electronic resource is beginning to have a momentous responsibility in research activities and remote learning. This becomes obvious one of the greatest studies of users approved by the JICS National e-resources observatory scheme during 2008 and 2009, E-resources have an increasing importance among university students, researcher and teachers, and the usage among the UK University Community was 65% (Romero Iglesias & Gimenez, 2013).

## **Concept of E-resource**

The term e-resource stands for “electronic resource”. It is just the same as a normal material, even if electronic resources can be read on your PC and are generally delivered via email thus saving any postage costs. Electronic resources usually come in two formats: PDF – these can be opened in Adobe Acrobat reader and EXE - these can be opened on some windows PC with no additional or any extra software to be installed, they won’t but run on MAC’S. E-resources come in diverse formats and each format has its own features (Turvey, 2017).

According to Tech Target (2005) an e-resource can be defined as an electronic version of a print substance that can be read by using a personal computer or by using an e-book reader. Also, an electronic resources is an electronic duplicate of a resource. You can read an electronic resource immediately you've paid for it, so there is no waiting for delivery. E-resources also proffer the expediency of size and portability; you can store your whole library on a laptop or other tool.

This work is therefore an experimental effort to determine the level of use of e-resource by university students in Nigerian university libraries. An e-resource is a electronic version of a conventional print and may come in many formats as well as e-audio format (all referred to here as e-resource). They are ideal for reading at home, work, or while travelling. E-resources can be read on desktop computers, laptops, smart phones, media troupe, and many other mobile devices. Some e-resources can be downloaded while others can only be read online. They are great option for education, entertainment and leisure. E-resource is an important source of information. It is available to all kinds of people lecturers, students, and researchers etc. (Aina, 2004).

### **Objective of the study**

The study is guided by the following objectives:

To know the types of electronic resources that are available for students in Delta

State University Library, Abraka?

To known the reasons for using e-resources.

To ascertain the purpose of consulting e-resources.

To determine the challenges encountered in using e-resources

## **Research Questions**

The study answered the following research questions:

What types of electronic information resources are available for students in Delta State University Library, Abraka?

What are the reasons for using e-resources?

What are purpose for consulting e-resources?

What are the reasons for not using e-resources?

What are the challenges faced in accessing electronic resources in Delta State University Libraries Abraka?

## **Literature Review**

Over the years, e-books and e-journals have been received in institutions of higher learning. This increase has occurred for diverse reasons. E-resource have made it feasible for libraries to keep on acquiring new resources in spite of insufficient fund allotment and narrow space. Also publishers and vendors have made e-resource more catching due to the fact that it provide large collections of content at striking prices (Springer, 2010). Springer indicated further that acquisition of e-resources has distorted the character of library catalogues, providing entry to much more information than has been earlier available and changing the mode in which users

interrelate with information materials. The growth of electronic resources has been well recognized, but changing handling models and patrons views on e-resources and how those views may be different from print and other resources has not been well understood.

Library as a living organism have been managed to meet users' needs in term of quality and excellence and provision of diversity of e-resources. Opaleke (2006) justified the importance of electronic resources in library, stating that library interest in electronic media is both logical and inevitable in spite of the intricacy of problems connected with the understanding of the resources. There are many benefits for users if organized in close connection with what have been called the "old" i.e. books and journals. People have come up against a very vital statement challenges with different nametag given the collection of varied electronic resources. In addition, Opalake (2006) concluded that whatever name these resources are called they do exist and are meant for students and lecturers' use and the natural centre for users to find these materials is the library, and its use, depends on the services the library provides.

According to Emejorho (2010), as with most other sources of information resources, e-resources present a variety of reimbursement to both the librarian and library patrons. Their advantages cannot be overemphasized, for instance an e-resource cannot be lost, defaced or dented and it typically provide quick and easy access to patrons. Also, electronic books permit the library to uphold increase in its collections with no encroaching on significant shelf space and they can be used any time of the day, This permit patrons to acquire their information desires at any spot in time without being guarded by library opening hours. The e-resources presents itself as an ideal means of information for every student's but mainly for those that are far off i.e. distant learners. Providing them with direct access to the resources they need without having to go to their university library. Electronic resources and texts as observed by Emejorho, offer

original potential for escalating access as well as changing learning attitude and academic research. In his view, e-resources have the benefit of instant global allotment, portability, instantaneously obtainable amid others.

As rightly articulated by Anuradha and Usha (2000), electronic resources play essential role in the field of library and information science by providing better services and speedy access to library such as: multi-access speed, functionality, content, storage etc. They further stress that e-resources like all internet-based resources breakdown geographical barriers. In addition to remuneration of e-resources, Tedd (2005) stated that e-resources are set to become normal materials in university libraries where patrons or clients and researcher the world over are suitable used to, and in fact, expect to find electronic information source to boost their learning and be part of their essential studying location.

Also, the extent of e-resource as an information basis cannot be over-emphasized, it is a vital part to study and research. It leads to individual's clarification, provides solutions to practice harms, brings remuneration to the users' locality and leads to scholarly advances. The crucial goal of any library is to provide valued sources and make them accessible for use, and libraries assist to achieve this goal (Abdulrahman, 2011).

E-resources are regarded as a major economic resource, which can be accessed by individuals and various institutions, faculty, Administrators, researchers and students of various levels and discipline. However, students constitute major users of the e-resources (Opaleke, 2006). Emojorho (2010) noted that the advent of the internet has broken down barriers of communication and permits access to information from anywhere in the world. In fact, it is quick, dependable and does not have control on content and offers the opportunity for access to up-to-date information and data globally.

The implementation of ICT has received extensive attention and to a large extent has taken a central place in many areas of personal and institutional environment. Practical integration of ICT into the process of teaching, learning and research has given rise to new forms of works in higher institutions of learning quality services. The education sector and tertiary institutions in particular are becoming main users of e-resources and this trend has been driven by the recognition of the fact that e-resources provide for flexible teaching and learning approaches. (Krubu,Okoh, Ebunuwele & Odion, 2012).

Zaid (2012) stated that electronic resources are delivered almost immediately and you can purchase, download and start reading them within minutes. You don't have to go to a bookshop to purchase them, neither wait for them for so long before they arrive in the mail. You can get whatever information you want immediately, by downloading an e-resources. Many e-resources are sold nowadays with bonuses, which are not applicable to printed books. This adds values to your acquisition. Electronic resources take up small space. You basically don't require any room to keep them. There is no need for library or shelf to keep them. You can store as many e-resources as possible in your computer. Electronic resources are portable. You can carry a whole library of millions of e-resources with you, on CD, on a laptop, note-book or any book reader, without worrying about their weight. With today's technology you can read e-resources anywhere, on the bus, train, and while on the queue. E-resources are more safely stored and portable. They can be passed easily from one place to another. They also withstand time more than print books.

Emojorho (2010), opined that, e-resource can be described as an electronic resource that is now having the most significant impact on multi-faced nature in enhancing library service provision in three ways. Firstly, it is a resource that can be consulted and used like any other



reference tool. Secondly, it is more active and far-reaching than any other resources in the library setting. Finally, it can be used by users anywhere. Base on this Opaleke (2006) noted that, it is not enough for a library to select, acquire, preserve and organize electronic resources but to ensure that the materials meet the various information needs of users and provide avenue by which they can access the information sources through adequate provision of information access. In another development, Olorunshola (1997) argued that the provision of information can be made more useful and well-organized with the use of e-resources and training of users in managing these resources in the library.

Electronic resources can provide, for rapid access to more information and connected websites. E-resources are searchable, you can search for any information in an e-resource, instead of opening page after page. E-resources can be interactive and have audio, video, and animations, which can improve the message that the author is trying to convey. They are delivered via Internet, there is no delivery cost. They can be printable, so that if you desire to examine an e-resource in the normal way, you can reasonably produce it with your domicile printer or at any printing store. Electronic resources are extremely simple to sell and allocate. Populace living in large restructured cities, in a distant village, in a distant country or on a small island, can also access e-resources. It takes them the same time to obtain and download an e-resources, provided you have an internet link. It is also feasible to purchase e-resources 24/7 from the comfort of your own house of office (Zaid,2012).

According to Opaleke (2006), today Internet is becoming very popular and more people prefer e-resources for reading because it saves our time and money. E-resources are electronic books and journals and are sometimes called electronic resources. These online materials save our time and money as they are easily available on the internet. You can download these

resources immediately from Internet. Some electronic resources are obtainable free of cost on deferent websites. E-resources are reachable in PDF configure and some websites provides catalog in deferent formats like Audio textbook, so it becomes easier to understand these e-resources. You can see these online resources on many subjects. Therefore, you do not have to buy usual books for every course. There are some resources that can be connected to other websites and they provide you the access to other information source. These are very good for quick and easy learning as they give direct access to your information desires.

## **Methodology**

Descriptive survey method was used to carry out this research. Target population were the students of faculty of education and postgraduate schools of all the federal universities in South- South, Nigeria. Five hundred and twenty questionnaire were administered to the respondents and 485 copies were returned and found valid for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

**Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents**

Item	Number	Percentage
B. Sc	267	55.0
M. Sc	162	33.4
Ph. D	56	11.5

Table 1, shows that 267 (55%) of the respondents were undergraduates students pursuing their B.Sc degree. Also, 162 (33%) of them were M.Sc. Students while only 56 (11%) of them were Ph.D students.

**Table 2:Types of e-resources in Delta State University Library**

s/n	Item	Number	Percentage
1.	Electronic Books	11	2.3
2.	Electronic Journals	112	23.1
3.	Hinari	31	6.4
4.	Electronic Newspapers	115	23.7
5.	Electronic Magazine	21	4.3
6.	DVD	3	0.62
7.		18	3.7
8.		11	2.3
9.		178	36.7

**Table 3: Reasons for Using E-resources**

s/n	Item	Number	Percentage
10.	Instantaneous availability	11	2.3

11.	Easy to use	112	23.1
12.	Storage capability	31	6.4
13.	Up-to-datedness	115	23.7
14.	24/7 accessibility	21	4.3
15.	Space reduction	3	0.62
16.	Expediency	18	3.7
17.	Pleasure of reading	11	2.3
18.	Access from anywhere	178	36.7

When the respondents were asked to indicate their reasons for using e-resources, a majority of them indicated that they use e-resources because it is accessible anywhere with 178 (36.7%), up-to-datedness 115 (23.7%), easy to use 112 (23.1%) and storage capability 31 (6.4%) came third and fourth respectively. This a clear indication that e-resources can be access by students anywhere in the globe with the aid of Internet connectivity and with this, information needs of the students can be easily meant by the librarians wherever they are, because in this digital age of Internet distance is no barrier in library services to users.

**Table 4: Purpose of Consulting E-resources**

s/n	Item	Number	Percentage
1.	Reference purpose	31	6.4
2.	Study and Research	161	33.2
3.	Academic dissemination	172	35.5
4.	Class preparation	11	2.3
5.	Through suggestions made by librarians and lectures	49	10.1
6.	Encouragement from colleagues	61	12.56

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Table 4 is on the purpose of consulting e-resources. It is very obvious from the study that the majority of the respondents consult e-resources for academic dissemination 172 (35.5%); for study and research 161 (33.2%) respectively. This finding implies that students consult or use e-resources at one time or the other for their academic activities

**Table 5: Challenges Encountered in Using E-resources**

s/n	Item	Number	Percentage
1.	Power Outage	23	4.7
2.	Title Unavailable	35	7.2
3.	Lack of awareness	47	9.7
4.	Screen reading	94	19.4
5.	Not necessary	32	6.6
	Server not open	75	15.5
6.	Can find information need in other sources e.g. print journal and print books	125	25.8
7.	Selecting the correct record and the clicking through several times and logging on if off-campus	17	3.5
8.	Difficulty to find e-resources in the catalogue	37	7.6

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Table 5 revealed the reasons for not using e-resources. Can find information need in other sources like print journals and print books ranked first with 125 (25.8%), Screen reading ranked second with 94 (19.4%) followed by server not found 75 (15.1%). The implication is that not all

the students can comfortably use e-resources due to some challenges they faced as revealed in the study such as server not open and difficulties in reading through the screen etc.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study have been quite revealing. It was revealed from the study that students use e-resources because they are up-to-date and they can be accessed anywhere and as such students were able to use them regularly for research works, study and update their knowledge for academic dissemination. This agrees with Emojorho (2010) who indicated that the advent of the Internet has broken down barriers of communication and permits access to information from anywhere in the world. In fact, it is quick, reliable and does not have limit on content and offers the occasion for access to up-to-date information and data internationally due to their 24/7 accessibility. Opaleke (2006) reported that e-resources are regarded as a key economic resource, which can be accessed by individuals and different institutions, faculty, Administrators, researcher and students of diverse levels and discipline. Students constitute major users of the e-resources. Also, 112 (23.09%) agreed that the reason for using e-resource is because of their up-to-datedness, in assisting their users to be current in their field of study. Spring (2010) observed that e-resources are preferred by different scholars because they enclose current information.

However, the study also revealed that some of the challenges faced by the respondents in using electronic resources such as power outage; difficulties in screen reading and poor Internet connectivity. This implies that there are no adequate provision for power supply in the university library outside the general power supply in the university community. This finding

agrees with those of Felix, Dangani and Fari (2019) and Ankrah and Atuase (2018), that on the use of e-materials by postgraduate students of the University of Cape Coast, who reported that the majority of the respondents were of the view that power outages was the main problem faced in using e-resources. In the same vein Tella (2019) et al reported that the use of e-resources by teaching staff is hampered by lack of Internet service, inadequate power supply, unavailability of e-resources, and lack of online access.

### **Recommendations**

1. The library management should ensure that the Internet facilities in the library are adequate to provide sufficient services to their users irrespective of their locality.
2. The library should ensure they are very vast in cumulating information. This will assist them in providing up-to-date and present information to their users in different subject anywhere across the globe.
3. Library users ought to be giving basic course about the use of e-resources which will assist them in using e-resources to gather their information desires.
4. Library management must provide diverse strategy that will help users in reading through the display easily. That is, adequate and easily accessible e-resource readers should be provided.

### **Conclusion**

The use of e-resources in libraries cannot be overemphasized. Most libraries across the globe purchase e-resources and it is the duty of the librarians to make sure these resources are

use by their clients. It is therefore very important for the librarians to provide all the required services that are desirable for the use of e-resources in their libraries. This will facilitate the users to access these resources maximally. It is also very obvious that the use of e-resources has become a vital issue in the university libraries. Users have diverse view about e-resources. The result of the study exposed that majority of the respondents use e-resources a lot for intellectual dissemination, study and research purpose while some of them use them only when it is enormously required due to difficulties they faced through screen reading using diverse strategy in accessing the information sources to meet their information desires.

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